



#IGiveCatholic Advent Challenge supports Diocese

During the season of Advent, we focus on Prayers, Fasting, Almsgiving and Evangelization.

In 2012, the concept of *Giving Tuesday* was launched through the efforts of two organizations in New York City. Since its inception, *Giving Tuesday*, while typically held the Tuesday following Thanksgiving Day, has morphed into an array of crowdfunded days through late November and into early December with a variety of charitable names and causes.

Soon after Giving Tuesday 2018, the Diocese of Lake Charles embarked on a customized version and the *#IGiveCatholic \$20 Lenten Challenge* launched in 2019. After a successful initial venture, the *#IGiveCatholic \$20 Advent Challenge* was added. For several years now, both are among the annual diocesan-wide collections.

The *#IGiveCatholic \$20 Advent Challenge* collection supports the diocesan endeavors of Seminarian Education, the works of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, and Diocesan Communications. Donors may select the endeavor they prefer to support or indicate that their donation will support all three.

The donor may donate as much or as little as they choose with the \$20 suggestion made only to indicate that a small donation can go a long way when fellow parishioners join in the cause.

This year's Season of Advent begins November 27, 2022, a perfect time to decide to "Give Catholic" and support a favorite diocesan project.

The *#IGiveCatholic \$20 Advent Challenge* is an online event. All donations will be accepted through our website at <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=pKJpFu>. Contact your local church parish for more details on how to donate in person or by mail.

Thank you for your prayers and generosity. We are One Diocese, One Church.

Office closures, publication dates

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 24-25, for Thanksgiving, reopening on Monday, November 28, for regular business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Offices will also be closed on Thursday, December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Publication dates for the *Catholic Calendar* in December are December 9 and December 23.

State Catholic School Student of Year program announced

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

Catholic schools throughout Louisiana will have an exciting opportunity to shine the light on the best of their students during the inaugural Louisiana Catholic Student of the Year Program. The statewide competition — the first time among diocesan Catholic school students only — will debut on March 3, 2023, in Lafayette.

The program is designed to recognize outstanding students in grades 5, 8, and 12 who have demonstrated excellence in discipleship, leadership, service, citizenship, and academic achievement.

The decision for Catholic schools to sponsor their own Student of the Year Award came about after recent changes to the Louisiana Department of Education Student of the Year process.

"The biggest factor in the decision was the abolishment of a non-public category in the traditional state competition," said Martha M. Mundine, Deputy Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and Louisiana Catholic School Student of the Year Coordinator. "All seven of our dioceses cover more than one geographical parish and exist in more than one public school system. To be included in the same categories with the public regions, all dioceses were competing in anywhere from three to five regions."

The Louisiana Catholic Student of the Year Program is open to the state's seven dioceses — Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Houma-Thibodaux, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Shreveport, and the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The new format will allow each diocese to compete as one entity, sending one representative for each grade — 5, 8, and 12 — to compete at the state Catholic School Student of the Year level.

Mundine said the competition will be similar to past competitions, including portfolio and writing assessments as well as interviews, but noted unique opportunities for extra guidelines.

"Having a competition solely for Catholic schools enables us to include additional criteria according to Catholic school standards and benchmarks, especially in the area of discipleship," said Mundine.

To be selected as a Student of the Year, a student must earn a cumulative 3.2 grade point average during the past three years and first grading period of the current year.

Students compete with their peers at the school system level before advancing to the Diocesan Student of the Year regional competition. A total of 21 finalists from the regional level — one elementary, middle, and high school student from each diocese — will advance to the state competition on March 3.

Prior to selecting the three state winners, students will participate in the writing assessment and interview to be conducted by a panel of judges chosen by diocesan superintendents or designees. State winners will be submitted to Louisiana BESE board for announcement following an awards reception in April 2023.

Mundine offers a few words of advice for any student competing in the state finals: "By virtue of being selected to represent your school, you exude the characteristics of a model Catholic school student. Just be yourself and let Christ's light shine through you in all that you do."

DIOCESAN RECOVERY UPDATE No. 5

Much progress was made during the month of October 2022 in the ongoing recovery of the Diocese of Lake Charles, as the long-awaited Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) ramped up considerably for the first time since Hurricane Laura made landfall in 2020.

While damage inspections of several of the 500-plus structures are "tabletop" versions — basically an inspection completed via extensive photos, reports, and written descriptions — two to three sites were inspected onsite during each week in October with the process slated to continue until all inspections are complete.

In addition to FEMA inspectors assessing the level of damages to determine a potential repair cost, representatives from FEMA's Environmental and Historic Preservation Teams are also participating. Their role is to determine compromises to the environment or to documented historical sites, as well as assessing new properties that are slated to house permanent replacement structures. In addition to diocesan representatives, including FEMA consultants, a representative of the architect assigned to the project is also present to respond to site specific and project specific questions.

As design work and repair work continue, the FEMA site visits are a welcome step toward determining the actual level of funding that will be reimbursed to the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The current monthly snapshots highlighting the ongoing recovery in the Diocese of Lake Charles:

DIOCESAN EXPENDITURES	through Sep 2022	October 2022	through Oct 2022
Emergency Work (Category B)	\$8,011,775.88		\$8,011,775.88
Emergency Work (Insurance Contractors)	\$13,829,967.75		\$13,829,967.75
Permanent Work Repairs	\$9,882,792.04		\$9,882,792.04
Temporary Facilities (See below)	\$9,063,826.99		\$9,063,826.99
Restoration Design (Architects) and PM	\$4,839,176.88		\$4,839,176.88
Insurance Consultants	\$440,459.15		\$440,459.15
FEMA Consultants	\$1,318,013.61		\$1,318,013.61
TOTAL Expenditures to date (31 July 2022)	\$47,386,012.30	\$0.00	\$47,386,012.30

TEMPORARY SITES (Expenditures to date)

Our Lady's School Temp Facility	\$2,644,540.05		\$2,644,540.05
St. Louis High School Temp Facility	\$3,571,221.24		\$3,571,221.24
St. Margaret School Temp Facility	\$2,712,584.94		\$2,712,584.94
Christ the King Church	\$95,122.90		\$95,122.90
DOLC Storage	\$40,357.86		\$40,357.86
	\$9,063,826.99	\$0.00	\$9,063,826.99

PROJECTS COMPLETED / PROJECTS IN DESIGN

A total of 72 DOLC project sites impacted by Hurricane Laura.
A total of 32 DOLC project sites are under active design or specifications development for repairs / restoration.
A total of 25 DOLC project sites have a combination of active work and/or active design for repairs / restoration.
A total of 15 DOLC project sites, restoration is complete.

TOTAL INSURANCE PROCEEDS	\$30,000,000.00
FEMA OBLIGATIONS TO DATE	\$20,045,961.94
FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS TO DATE	\$7,372,973.69

Data as of 31 Oct 2022

Vianney House assists those discerning priesthood

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — The Diocese of Lake Charles recently observed National Vocation Awareness Week, November 6-12. It is a time dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated life, and to renew our prayers and support for those who are considering one of these vocations.

To assist those discerning the priesthood, the Diocese is blessed to have relocated Vianney House to 206 Aqua Drive across from Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church earlier this year.

Nearly two years to the day that Hurricane Laura damaged Vianney House in 2020, Bishop Glen John Provost blessed its new location on August 24, 2022.

In 2011, the Diocese of Lake Charles opened Vianney House, a residence for men discerning the priesthood. The original location was the old faculty residence of St. Louis Catholic High School on Bank Street.

A second hurricane six weeks after Laura, followed by devastating consequences from the ice storm in early 2021, forced Vianney House to close. It was the intention of the Diocese to relocate, and possibilities began to unfold providentially by the end of that same year.

"A very generous bequest from Leslie and Elizabeth Singletary Richard in April 2022 made it possible for the Diocese to purchase a new Vianney House, immediately across the street from Our Lady of Good Counsel, an excellent location for a house of discernment," said Bishop Provost.

As Director of Vianney House and Director of Vocations, Rev. Michael Caraway worked behind the scenes since mid-April creating an environment where young men will prayerfully discern God's call in their lives. He has also witnessed the kindness of others on many levels.

"Over several months, as I prepared the Vianney House for the incoming men, a great joy has been seeing people's support and generosity," said Father Caraway. "Helping men discern their vocational calling is so important and something that I love to do. It has been a joy to see that so many recognize the importance of men discerning the priesthood and are willing to give to ensure that it can happen."

Under the spiritual direction of Rev. Caraway, those living at Vianney House can discern seriously God's call to a vocation to the diocesan priesthood, but who have not yet decided to enter the seminary.

"The Vianney House is not for men who *know* they will become priests," said Father Caraway. "It is meant for those who do not know but want to find out. My immediate hope is to help the men in the program to hear the voice of God and discern their vocational calling."

He went on to say, "My more long-term hope is to create a culture of vocations where young men are open

to the priesthood and willing to discern whether God is calling them to be a priest."

Regardless of whether a resident of Vianney House goes to seminary afterwards, he will have acquired virtues and built confidence and conviction to live as a holy Christian man in the world.

The discernment program at Vianney House runs for one full school year, August to May, and has as its focus three principal areas — prayer, study and work, and community life.

"Because of the structured schedule of prayer, instruction, and direction, residents are blessed with enlightenment from God which gives a man confidence in what he must do next," Father Caraway explained.

The first two residents at the new location of Vianney House are Cameron Fontenot of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Lake Charles, and Logan Guillot of Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in DeQuincy. Both were present when Bishop Provost blessed the house, including the chapel

inside where he placed a first-class relic of St. John Vianney on the altar. The beloved saint is the patron of priests and confessors.

"We are delighted and very thankful to God for the reopening of Vianney House and look forward to welcoming those who will discern the priesthood before entering the seminary," said Bishop Provost.

To inquire about applying to the Vianney House for the 2023-2024 school year, please contact Father Michael Caraway, Director of Vocations, at 337-439-7400, Ext. 226, or email michael.caraway@lcdioocese.org. Applicants must be at least 18 years old and pass a Safe Environment Background Check.

If you would like to contribute to Vianney House, checks may be written to the Diocese of Lake Charles with "Vianney House" in the memo and mailed to Diocese of Lake Charles, attention: Vianney House, P.O. Box 3223, Lake Charles, LA 70602.



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, extends his hand as he blesses the Vianney House at its new location on Aqua Drive, across from Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church. Joining him, from left, are Rev. Michael Caraway, Director of Vianney House; Logan Guillot and Cameron Fontenot, who are residing as students for the 2022-2023 school year. (Photo credit: Morris LeBleu/Diocese of Lake Charles)

CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS RECOGNITION

Rev. Don Piraro honored for 55 years to Priesthood

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

Family lore has it that when Reverend Don Piraro's parents brought him home from the hospital, his Sicilian grandmother said, "This one will be a priest," as she held him for the first time. He was born in Lake Charles on July 30, 1941.

Father Piraro, who served as the first director of Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff, was honored for his 55th anniversary to the priesthood during a surprise presentation on October 11 at Villa Maria Retirement Center in Lake Charles where he has resided for the past six years. He was ordained on June 3, 1967.

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, celebrated the 16th annual Clergy and Religious Recognition Mass on September 14 at Camp Karol in Moss Bluff, however, Father Piraro was unable to attend.

Father Piraro said his vocation was nurtured by the Christian Brothers at Landry Memorial and especially by his eighth-grade teacher, Brother Mel Herman Bach, whose class had nine boys enter Immaculata Seminary or the de la Salle Novitiate the next year.

"Brother Herman proved invaluable in my discernment," said Father Piraro. "My advice to a young person discerning a vocation is to begin to meditate each day, to find a good spiritual director, and to attend a vocation retreat."

The encouragement of others is also important.

"I was supported in prayer by the people of my home parish, St. Hubert (now St. Theodore), and our pastor Monsignor Curtis Vidrine who preached at my first Mass twelve years later. But especially my parents were supportive and gave me the freedom to become what God's grace was shaping," Father Piraro recalled.

In remarks to those gathered, Monsignor Daniel A. Torres, Vicar General for Pastoral Ministry, said, "We give thanks to God for the gift of Father Piraro's life, his 55 years as a priest, and for his importance here at Villa Maria."

Father Piraro, affectionately known as the Mayor of Villa Maria, quipped that his leadership in that regard is that he "just runs the meetings."

"We are truly grateful for everything you have done for the Diocese of Lake Charles and for everything you have done for our spiritual journey," continued Monsignor Torres. "On behalf of all of us, we wanted to say thank you and we love you

very much and pray that you may be blessed with many years of happiness and joy here at Villa Maria."

Father Piraro served as a Priest for the Diocese of Lafayette from 1967 to 1980. He continued his priesthood for the Diocese of Lake Charles after it was formed in 1980.

Church parishes where Father Piraro served include:

- In the Diocese of Lafayette — Church of the Assumption in Franklin; and Pastor of Our Lady of Wisdom Chapel and the Catholic Student Center at USL (now UL, Lafayette)
- In the Diocese of Lake Charles — Saint Margaret of Scotland, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and Our Lady Queen of Heaven, all in Lake Charles; Saint Theodore in Moss Bluff; and Saint Pius X in Ragley.

Among his crowning achievements is the major work that Father Piraro did for the Diocese of Lake Charles on the design, the financial drive, and the building of Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff. He was named Director of the Center in 1993 and helped oversee construction of the buildings and its opening in November 1995. Upon his retirement in 2010, Father Piraro was named Director Emeritus.

"When I returned to the Diocese of Lake Charles, Bishop (Jude) Speyrer looked me in the eyes and said, 'You know you are building the retreat house.' I began work on the project in 1982," Father Piraro recalled.

Also notable is the work he did in the effort to establish Abraham's Tent and served as its General Chair from 1986 to 1995.

A writer since his high school days, Father Piraro has kept a prayer journal since the age of 15.

"As a retired priest, I continue this hobby by writing a monthly spiritual reflection," he said. "I am also an avid reader, write an occasional poem, do some sketching and listen to lots of Twentieth and Twenty-First Century classical music."

Father Piraro has had several articles and poetry published. He was a columnist for the Franklin Banner-Tribune newspaper much of the time that he lived there and would later serve as monthly columnist for the Southwest Catholic, 1993-2005; and a contributing editor for The Priest, a national magazine for Catholic clergy, 2000-2004.

In 2005, he was winner of the John XXIII Award from the National Organization for the Continuing Education of the Roman Catholic Clergy in 2005 for outstanding contribution to the field of the continuing education of priests.

Working in adult education and



Rev. Don A. Piraro, seated front, was honored for 55 years to the priesthood during a presentation at Villa Maria Retirement Center on October 11, 2022. He is joined by Rev. Monsignor Daniel A. Torres, V.G. (26 years); from left; Rev. Albert Borel (41 years); Rev. John Poerio (62 years); and Deacon Tony Pousson (8 years). (Photo credit: Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

spiritual formation of young adults and adults has been one of Father Piraro's greatest joys of the priesthood.

"I have also enjoyed working with people in spiritual direction and in forming spiritual directors," he said, adding, "Another joy has been celebrating the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and preaching."

He expressed his gratitude to the residents and staff at Villa Maria remarking that it has been a "sanctuary" in his retirement years.

"I have survived and done well by being present here," said Father Piraro. "I thank all of you who are members of this community, because the community here is so rich and supported, and the primary reason why I chose Villa Maria."

For a combined 570 years of service to the Catholic Church, this year's honorees included a total of 14 priests, 2 deacons, and 2 religious sisters. The following were recognized for significant anniversaries at the September Clergy and Religious Recognition Luncheon:

- **55 years** — Rev. Don Piraro; Sister Camille Martinez, S.E.C.; and Sister Jeannette Touchet, S.E.C.
- **45 years** — Deacon Garrett Caraway and Deacon George Carr

- **40 years** — Very Rev. Aubrey Guilbeau
- **35 years** — Rev. Luke Krzanowski, M.S.; Rev. Monsignor Jace Eskind, Rev. Marian Susil Fernando, and Rev. Charles Okorougo
- **30 years** — Rev. Carlos Garcia and Canon Jean-Marie Moreau, Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest
- **25 years** — Rev. Alan Trouille and Rev. Brian King
- **20 years** — Rev. Clyde Thomas
- **10 years** — Rev. Stephen D.B. Thompson
- **5 years** — Rev. Trey Ange and Rev. Paul Jussen, M.S.

On behalf of the Serra Club of Lake Charles, Denis Husers presented Father Piraro with a check for \$550 (\$10 for every year of his priesthood) and a keepsake program from the annual recognition event. All honorees for 2022 received a check in \$10 increments for their years of service.

Supporting organizations helping to fund the monetary gifts of congratulations include the Knights of Columbus Assemblies and Councils; Knights of Peter Claver Assemblies, Chapter, and Courts; Catholic Daughters of the Americas Courts, Christian Mothers, parish Altar Societies, and the East Deanery Serra Club.

St. Louis Catholic High students put faith, love in action

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

The hands and feet of Jesus Christ were busy throughout the Diocese of Lake Charles and local community recently with the help of more than 260 students from St. Louis Catholic High School.

Groups of freshmen and seniors spent the morning of October 12 at more than 15 sites with projects that ranged from baking cookies and making Christmas cards at the Religious Sisters of Mercy Convent, creating a rosary prayer garden at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, bagging groceries at Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, cleaning

windows at Saint Charles Center and Camp Karol, prepping vegetables and meals at Abraham's Tent, and making rosaries for pro-life ministries.

Henry Gil, a senior who is no stranger to volunteering, put his landscaping skills to use. He was among 20 seniors who spruced up the gardens around Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur.

"We were able to remove limbs from the prayer garden and trimmed trees to make it look a little nicer," said Gil. He has been volunteering since before he was a freshman but admits he was "iffy" about it at first.

"Working with disabled

children helped me realize that it feels good to help people; it feels good to be there for someone, for the community," he said.

The Service Day, between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., took place while sophomores and juniors took PSAT tests.

Not only did a group of 25 freshmen learn how to make rosaries for use with pro-life ministries such as Rachel's Vineyard, Grief to Grace, and the Gabriel Project, but they also spiritually adopted an unborn child. Elizabeth Austin named her "baby" Clara Jane.

"We were asked to pray a nine-month novena, and we each chose a date that we

'conceived' the baby," said Austin. "I chose October 14. I love kids a lot. We made rosaries and crucifix earrings with encouraging notes for people who have had an abortion and later regretted their decision."

Paul Adams said he had never heard of the Gabriel Project or Rachel's Vineyard.

"I thought women just had abortions and no place to go afterward for help," Adams remarked. "I enjoyed helping today and being able to make a difference in someone's life."

The students were also given a mason jar to fill over time with extra money to donate for the Grief to Grace retreats.

Holley Fontenot, St. Louis High teacher, coach, and site coordinator for the Service Day, said her hope is that students find joy and fulfillment in participating in service with their peers and teachers.

"I think there is great value in group service like this where students serve their community as a community, all united in a common purpose to be the hands and feet of Christ," said Fontenot.

Sprucing up at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Vinton was a chance for 20 seniors to bond as they cleaned windows, tables, and more than 200 chairs in the fellowship hall.

"It is fun when we are doing the service hours together and making friends along the way," said Norma Dedear. "Being involved in service reminds us that it is important to give back to our community," adding that she enjoys volunteering at middle school summer camps and at Abraham's Tent.

Seniors William Bright and Thomas Alley signed

up to help at Hobo Hotel for Cats since they both like animals. Bright is the owner of three dogs, and Alley has two dogs himself.

"I had never been to Hobo Hotel before, so it was cool being able to provide a service for the pets," said Bright. "We cleaned up areas at the shelter where the cats stay and their litter boxes."

Alley said he enjoyed giving back to a non-profit organization like Hobo Hotel. When he is doing service hours on his own, he said he enjoys doing manual labor like moving things for people and mowing lawns.

Aden Hayes was among the seniors who did yard work at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church. He said that he enjoyed working with friends but is looking ahead to racking up more service hours on his own.

"I'll probably volunteer at Abraham's Tent. I like going there to help out," said Hayes. "I also enjoy writing letters to veterans and children at orphanages. It's a lot more personable."

The service hours, both in group settings and as individuals, allow the students to live out the Gospel they study in Theology.

Other Service Day sites included:

- Cleaning up around

the Grotto at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

- Picking up trash and debris, and cleaning up around gravesites at Consolata Cemetery in Lake Charles

- Cleaned up gravesites and did some landscaping at Mimosa Pines Cemetery in Sulphur

- Pulled weeds and trimmed trees at Old Catholic Cemetery in downtown Lake Charles

- Washed windows and cleaned up the grounds at St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff

- Organized books in Landry Library at St. Louis Catholic High School

Many students told Fontenot that they enjoyed the Service Day.

"I heard from students that they appreciated being able to choose their service site, and they enjoyed doing community service with their friends," Fontenot said. "One student remarked that he really enjoyed doing yard work with his coach. It meant a lot to him that the adults were serving alongside the students."

Fontenot said she hopes that the exposure to so many Diocesan groups and ministries will help the students understand what it means to care for life at every stage.

Christ the King Procession Nov. 20

The Diocese of Lake Charles will honor the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, with a Eucharistic Procession on Sunday, November 20. The diocesan-wide celebration calls attention to the true meaning of the "Real Presence" of Christ in the consecrated host.

As part of the National Eucharistic Revival effort under way, the event will begin at 2:30 p.m. at the Lake Charles Civic Center Amphitheatre with Eucharistic Adoration and recitation of the rosary. The Procession will make its way downtown to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for a prayer service and benediction. A reception will follow in the Ave Maria Hall.

All are invited and encouraged to participate with their families during this important expression of the Catholic Church's belief of Christ's "True Presence" in the Eucharist.



Seniors from St. Louis Catholic High School make Christmas cards at the Religious Sisters of Mercy Convent in the Diocese of Lake Charles as part of their service hours on October 12. They were among 10 seniors and 9 freshmen who volunteered at the Convent baking cookies, making cards, cleaning windows, and power washing the courtyard.